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Charter School, Boston]

Dr. Piedad Robertson  
Secretary of Education  
Room 1401, McCormack Building  
One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108-1696

Dear Dr. Robertson,

Enclosed please find a proposal for a Charter School, with Parts I and II of the Application addressed. Given the timeline from RFP availability to the February 15 proposal deadline, we have not been able to secure all the necessary commitments to put all the pieces completely in place, but we are confident that our projected timeline will allow us to finish the preparatory work on schedule. This proposal represents sound and innovative pedagogy in its vision of a significantly different school experience for children, and suggests a very unique notion of a school's place in a community.

We look forward to your review and comments. Thank you.

Sincerely,  
*Patricia C. Ruane*  
Patricia C. Ruane, Ed. D.

February 14, 1994  
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# **PROPOSAL FOR A CHARTER SCHOOL**

Application Parts I and II

submitted by Patricia C. Ruane, Ed. D.

*The Charter School proposed here represents the collective vision of a consortium of entrepreneurial educators from public schools, educational leaders from local institutions of higher learning, private citizens and community organizers in the Boston area. This consortium intends to add community and business partners, and to refine the ideas presented during a planning year that involves community leaders in the neighborhood of the actual site. Our expectation is to open the doors to a new school in September, 1995.*

## **1. MISSION STATEMENT:**

The school's mission is to challenge all children to achieve their fullest intellectual and social development, and to share increasingly the responsibility for learning. All children must master the skills, knowledge, and understanding of a comprehensive curriculum so that they can become productive individuals and citizens, able to contribute and to interact respectfully with others. Our goal is to lose no child; rather, to empower each for full participation in the opportunities and challenges of the Twenty-first Century. This can best be accomplished in the context of a healthy community of learners, where diversity is viewed as an asset. (See Community Environment section.)

## **2. SCHOOL OBJECTIVES:**

*Because the concept of school presented here depends on a common belief that every member of the community is in process of becoming more developed, the objectives which follow encompass expectations for all. In addition to multi-year residents (children and adults), the learning community will also include pre-professionals and visiting professionals affiliated through intensive internships, as well as parents, community and college resource people.*





## **A. Academic objectives:**

*Each child will:*

1. Develop proficiency in the use of two languages - English and Spanish.

2. Acquire basic skills for the 21st Century and demonstrate appropriate application in a real context. Skills include:

a. Communication - the ability to: generate a variety of oral, written, literary and informational work; respond to and use the work of others.

b. Problem-Solving - the ability to: observe; collect, represent, and interpret data; make and test hypotheses; integrate known content with new information (make connections and discoveries); find and use a variety of resources; organize work to accomplish a complex task.

c. Analysis - the ability to: find and use patterns; untangle error; determine cause and effect; understand bias; evaluate pros and cons; make an informed judgment; discriminate information; assess self as a learner, setting and monitoring appropriate goals for physical, academic, and personal development.

d. Aesthetic - the ability to: express knowledge and experience through a variety of media; identify and appreciate the quality of one's own, and others' work; use an aesthetic lens in viewing past and modern society.

e. Technology - the ability to: use a variety of technology tools to acquire information and demonstrate learning. Such tools include word processing, database, spreadsheets, graphics applications, CD-ROM and on-line search, telecommunications, hypercard stacks, laser disks.

f. Collaboration - the ability to work with others to: plan tasks and strategies; synthesize and organize information; maximize individual and group learning and production; evaluate and improve individual and group performance; listen to feedback and modify work as a result of ongoing assessment; assume different roles to make the group productive and task-oriented; accomplish complex, multistep problems and projects; work as mentor and learner.

3. Demonstrate knowledge of, and facility with the major concepts and content of traditional disciplines of learning. The school will use





professional documents, such as the NCTM Standards, national and state standards as a guide to curriculum design and assessment.

*Each resident teaching professional will:*

1a. Demonstrate proficiency in Spanish and English (through specially designed conversational classes organized in conjunction with college and Adult Education partners, as well as parent resources).

2a. Develop a repertoire of instructional, technology, collaboration and communication skills that will enhance teachers' ability to create learning environments that affirm the dignity of each child.

3a. Acquire expertise both in a particular content area, and in an ability to transform this knowledge to meaningful teaching and learning; stay up to date on trends, resources, professional college partners and professional colleagues/resources outside the school).

4a. Set academic and or professional goals as individuals, and as part of adult teaching and learning teams; engage in mentoring relationships (as helper and learner).

*Each intern will:*

1b. Develop basic proficiency in Spanish and English.

2b. Learn and practice instructional, technology, communication and collaboration skills, with mentoring from a resident teacher (and college supervisor, as appropriate).

3b. Develop expertise in one discipline, and practice transforming this knowledge to relevant teaching and learning situations.

4b. Learn to use the resources of a team to solve problems, obtain feedback, and plan strategically.

*Parents and resource people will have access to:*

1c. Spanish/English instruction - as teachers or learners.

2c. Orientation to the school's instructional approaches, and ongoing classes in communication, technology, and collaboration skills.

3c. Specific Parent education will be designed to match: developmental issues (learning and social), and shifts in the dynamic of the child/parent/teacher partnership as children progress as learners and



people. In addition to child development forums, adult development will also be part of this program.

4c. Orientation/training to enhance group process and decision making for those people who represent the community in a planning, governing or advisory capacity.

5c. Additional courses, seminars, training, as requested to meet specific community needs or interests.

**B. Non-academic objectives:**

*All Children and Adults will:*

1. Demonstrate, through interaction and work, a belief in their own, and others' personal efficacy as learners.
2. Demonstrate their willingness to take risks, make mistakes, gain insight and humility, and move forward.
3. Take appropriate responsibility for their own learning. This implies a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses as a learner, and a willingness and capacity to design an individualized response.
4. Reflect formally and informally on themselves as learners, set goals, and document progress toward growth.
5. Develop learning skills: listening, self-criticism, time management, organization, study strategies.
6. Enable and celebrate the learning, risk-taking, and performance of others.
7. Seek out the diversity of ideas, voices, and cultures represented within the "village," as well as the wider community of learning scholarship.
8. Work to create a set of community values, based on democratic principles. These values encompass and respect difference, yet affirm common belief and behavioral norms necessary for community health and prosperity. Both decisions and rules will reflect these values.





### **C. Community environment:**

The African proverb that it "takes a whole village to educate a child" is central to our thinking about how the above mission and objectives can best be accomplished. The proposed charter school seeks to engage all members of the community, broadly defined, in this learning/teaching process, which begins with children and continues throughout adult life. A sound educational partnership assures positive community growth, and provides a common ground that can connect and strengthen a diverse population.

In using the idea of "village," we assume a variety of people at various stages of development, with different voices, and with different ways of knowing and sharing their knowledge. It connotes a cooperative community that is, itself, constantly growing and changing, yet committed to some common purposes and beliefs that unite people without negating their differences. Members of this community are proactive. They speak in the first person, take responsibility and control for their individual and communal work, and hold high standards for all types of work performance. Young members are accepted as worthy, regardless of their idiosyncrasies, and there is a universal expectation that all will become skilled, productive, and different - in short, that they will become their best selves, able to enrich the total community with their unique contributions. Children are given dignity as learners, with many and varied opportunities for modeling, coaching, and mentoring - both in group and solo contexts. Decision-making is shared, and responsibility is high for all members of the community.

Learning is not bounded by instructional minutes or a place called school. Rather, it is a life-long enterprise, pursued formally and informally by all at various times. Villagers acknowledge that people do not necessarily develop new skills or understandings at the same pace, and accommodations are made so that all learners experience their learning as normal. It is as common to see adults helping adults as it is to see adults helping children, and children helping each other. People set goals at all levels, and they demonstrate both progress and mastery in terms of real applications of their learning. Mentors and learners assess the learner's work, and new or additional goals are set. Young members are guided, initially, by the adults' sense of basic skills and experiences, but increasingly, as the student becomes more independent and competent, he or she assumes more responsibility for the definition of tasks and projects. There are opportunities for general study, as well as intensive





learning experiences such as immersion and apprenticeships. Successes and steps forward become cause for community notice and celebration

### 3. STATEMENT OF NEED:

#### A. Why this type of school?

*We are not, we are reminded, teaching in the manner required of us if we are to insure this nation's technological and military primacy. What, it is insistently implied, can be more important than being "number one" in the world? (Surely not the happiness and health of children, released to find their own ways of being children, of existing in the world.)* from Maxine Green, "Imagination, Community and the School" in The Review of Education, Vol. 15, p.223. 1993

The task of successfully educating today's children hinges on a process that empowers, multiple products of increased quality and complexity, and ongoing feedback and support. The truly educated child is not a perfectly executed widget, but a work of art - one of a kind. Schools grounded in the development of a healthy community offer children an educational environment so that ALL might develop themselves fully. Surrounding a child with an active, together community is a powerful route to "world class standards." Perhaps the path is not so linear, but more children are likely to complete, and subsequently exceed expectations.

The need for community in support of children's learning should not be confused with the community control movement of the 60's and beyond. That reform movement, more about control than community, failed. Yet the mistakes inform and warn any attempt to recreate school and community links. *First*, most of the practice lacked an integrated understanding of organizations, including the interplay of human development, politics, structure, and the role of symbol (Deal and Bolman). *Second*, most experiments treated community-building as an adult exercise in process, and few people were trained in communication or conflict resolution. There was also an absence of substantive information about pedagogy. Because the professionals were unclear, and therefore professionally vulnerable about what makes a difference in teaching and learning, they were unprepared to engage parents with the real agenda of children learning (or failing to learn). The result was a more frequent one-way communication which school people confused with empowerment, and which reinforced the unequal status relationship between teachers and parents. By and large, overwhelmed parents dropped out, while sophisticated parents began to demand special programs and placements



for their children. Schools responded in fear to these parents' demands, and the mistrust deepened on both sides of the school wall. *Third*, schools have been notorious in their unwillingness to invest in the growth and development of adults in tandem with the investment in children's learning. The noble intention of translating scarce dollars to direct program services has shortchanged the development of parents and teachers, just at the time when tremendous breakthroughs have been made in understanding teaching and learning. Typically, a public school system fights hard to keep professional development monies at about 1% of the total budget. This is dangerously low, unwise, and completely out of proportion to Research and Development thinking and investment in the private sector. *Finally*, the literature often discusses community only in the context of "poor" neighborhoods, which suggests that it is most appropriate and desirable in these settings. This connotation inappropriately limits what is possible for all communities!

Clearly, it's time for some intelligent models that will allow educators and community partners to:

- \* use innovative methods of educational instruction, structure, and management;
- \* come together respectfully as learners, to develop new skills and tools;
- \* apply a sophisticated understanding of how organizations work;
- \* rethink limited definitions of who constitutes "community";
- \* reconsider how schools can use community to support children's and adults' learning, regardless of socioeconomics.

A return to the notion of "Village" may help clarify the need for a new approach to community. As a concept, village connotes many well established symbols of productivity and solidarity. But the challenge is to recreate this sense of caring and support with some modern caveats added to the picture. Whereas the traditional village assumes the presence of a single culture, a common language, and a uniform set of behaviors and beliefs, the urban village of the 21st Century cannot take these assumptions as a given. First, the emerging village is not self-sufficient. Rather, it nests within a wider context of resources that are increasingly global in nature. Second, village residents are new to the neighborhood. They come and go, with no sense of common history. Initially, they seek help and protection from others who are "like them." Often, languages and cultures are dramatically different. Both real and imagined walls separate groups, and this sense of isolation or turf limits the potential and development of both individuals and groups.





Given the reality of what we must mean, today, when we say "community," it is crucial that we find intelligent ways to act, interact, teach, learn, and build our new villages together.

## **B. How will this proposal address the need?**

The proposed charter school deliberately, aggressively, and respectfully addresses excellent education in the context of the emerging community. It includes:

- \* high expectations for children and adult learners;
- \* solid core programs for children;
- \* a reciprocal bilingual environment;
- \* innovative approaches to teaching, learning, and assessment;
- \* funded educational programs and growth opportunities for adults;
- \* flexible, year-round access to learning, and opportunities for children, parents, and community members to design these opportunities with teachers;
- \* continuity of people and place;
- \* self-directed teaching teams with pre-professional and professional interns;
- \* governance by a trained leadership team that includes all segments of the community - adult and student members;
- \* partnerships, connections, and resource sharing with an extended community of organizations and individuals.

The school we propose to establish draws its ideas from the most compelling research and practice on teaching and learning (Bernice McCarthy, David and Roger Johnson and Bob Slavin, Grant Wiggins, Dennie Wolf, Howard Gardner, Lillian Katz, Don Pierson, Marie Clay, Yetta Goodman, Stan Pogrow, Dan Kirby, Mary Budd Rowe, Osborne and Freyberg, Elliot Eisner, Ted Sizer, Ernest Boyer, Eleanor Duckworth, Pat Carini, Vito Perrone, Paulo Freire, Jeffrey Howard, Lisa Delpit, Henry Giroux, Jim Cummins, Yvonne Fournier, Henry Olds, John Goodlad, James Banks, Project 2061, NCTM, Bradley Commission); on human development (Judy Arin-Krupp, Susan Loucks-Horsley, Paul Heckman, Stephen Covey, Robert Kegan, Maxine Green, Milbrey McLaughlin, Beverly Tatum, Gloria Johnson Powell, Art Costa, James Comer, Dick Wallace, Nel Noddings); and on organization development (Terry Deal, Lee Bolman, Michael Fullan, Chris Argyris, Peter Senge, Roger Fisher). Collectively, Planning Team members have studied this body of work, integrated it into many aspects of our teaching, administration, and professional development, and prepared ourselves both to teach theory and demonstrate it in practice. Many of these ideas are





reflected in this proposal. The resulting synthesis is a new concept of school that nurtures learning excellence and opportunities for children and adults.

#### **4. SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS:**

The desired location is Boston, but a specific site has not been secured. One possible site would be the Fenway or Mission Hill area, which is easily accessible to a multiethnic and multilingual resident population. It also is convenient to: transportation, partner institutions, community and cultural resources necessary to realize the school's academic and non-academic objectives. Our additional criteria include the presence of an active community leadership group (like the Multisectoral Planning Groups initiated under the Healthy Boston Project) and suitable space. Discussions with the administration of Roxbury Community College, the Archdiocese of Boston, and Wentworth Institute are in process.

The targeted population is 50% Hispanic and 50% English-speaking, with a socioeconomic and racial mix. We envision the school serving a pre-school through Grade 12 population, configured in grade level teams or clusters. This span of grades provides the kind of continuity necessary for children and families to become comfortable and known in a community context. Anticipated enrollment is 700 students, after all stages of growth are completely implemented. Initially, four teams will be established (two each of Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 2, and Grades 3 - 5), to work with approximately 300 children (75 per team). Subsequent teams and programs will be added on, at the rate of 50 children for each new grade level as children progress to new levels. Clusters will continue - Grades 6 - 8, Grades 9 - 12.

#### **5. RECRUITING AND MARKETING PLAN:**

The Planning Team (including community leaders) will publicize the school's programs through local media coverage, including radio, cable TV, and community newspaper highlights (Spanish and English public service announcements) with name and contact for more information. In addition to oral announcements, we will develop a simple bilingual brochure and work with already established community groups, local churches, community centers, politicians, health and day care centers, Headstart, Metco, businesses, libraries, etc. to distribute these brochures and host informational evenings/mornings/weekend sessions for further explanation. Daycare will be provided to facilitate attendance.



Once the school is opened, outreach will continue through special events that link the school in joint projects with other community groups, as well as open houses, recruiting of community mentors, community education programs hosted by the school, ongoing informational meetings, and participation in neighborhood political gatherings and celebrations. Community education programs/adult education courses will be printed bilingually and distributed through the routes described above initially, and eventually, through a telecommunications network that links these groups.

## **6. ADMISSIONS POLICY:**

Each family expressing an interest in enrolling a child in the school will be asked to complete a preliminary application form with basic information about the child's previous school experiences, and to supply the name and telephone number of a teacher or adult coach/mentor who has worked with the child, if appropriate. The parent and child will then be invited to an interview (in either Spanish or English), where two trained educators (one working with the parent, one with the child) will explain the program, explore the parent's commitment to a community and flexible school day/year approach, discuss and observe the child's interests, strengths and needs as a learner. Applications for the first class will be solicited in January and February of 1995. Admissions will be based on interest, Spanish or English ability, and the child's ability to function in a non-restrictive educational setting. Parents will be notified of acceptance by May 1. Once the program is underway, admissions will be accepted and acted upon year round, on a space available basis, and by Feb. 15 for incoming classes. Siblings will receive priority enrollment status.

The school will attempt to maintain the linguistic balance described above, with additional attention to cultural, racial and gender balance. The linguistic balance is an important factor in guaranteeing the strength and viability of the reciprocal bilingual program. Special care will be taken to admit children from different Hispanic backgrounds, and to create a cultural mix within this group. Other kinds of diversity are equally valuable to the school's mission to cultivate difference as an asset rather than a liability.

## **7. PROFILE OF THE FOUNDING COALITION**

The Planning Team is a consortium of sophisticated, highly skilled, ethnically diverse educators and citizens who understand teaching and learning, as well as organizations and politics. We have successful track





records, both as individuals and as professionals working together. Many of us have created partnerships and shared resources for a number of years - mentoring each other, collaborating on special projects, grant-writing, fund-raising, creating and running innovative educational programs. We are the kind of *different* and *productive* community which this charter school seeks to replicate for children and other adults. Our community includes:

- ✓ **MARIO BORUNDA** - Graduate Dean, Wheelock College
- \***BILL DANDRIDGE** - Dean, School of Education, UMass/Boston
- KATHLEEN DUNN** - Department Head, Education and Human Resources, Simmons College
- HELEN GUTTENTAG** - Director of Teacher Placement, Simmons
- BOB HAAS** - Planning Director, Dorchester Bay Economic Development Corp.
- LINDA LARSON** - Director, Brookline Adult and Community Education Program
- \***BESSIE LYMAN** - Director of Black Achievement, Newton Schools
- ✓ **ADELINE NAIMAN** - former Director of Academic Development and Instructional Design, MCET
- PAT RUANE** - former Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Brookline Schools, currently Visiting Scholar, U. of Arizona
- IRVING SCHWARTZ** - Assistant Director (retired), Brookline Adult Education Program
- WANDA SPEEDE-FRANKLIN** - Metco Director, Newton Schools
- VIVIAN TROEN** - Brookline teacher, creator of the Learning Teaching Collaborative, which prepares teaching teams in Brookline and Boston Schools, and matches them with full-time graduate interns
- \***CAROLYN WYATT** - Undergraduate Program Director (HELP!), Lesley College
- ARTHUR WILLIAMS** - attorney and politician, Roxbury
- \***DENNIE WOLF** - Director, Project PACE, Harvard

(People with asterisked names are reviewing the proposal for potential involvement in the partnership and planning. Given the tight timeframe and logistical difficulty of RFP availability, deadline, and distance collaboration, these people have not been able to confirm their involvement on the signatory sheet as of February 14.)

This proposal called the above group together, with Pat Ruane as the common contact. Subgroups of the Planning Group have worked together extensively, in formal and informal, educational and political contexts. Here are a few ongoing projects:





- a. Creation and continuation of the state's first Mentor Teacher Institute (at Wheelock);
- b. Invention and management of the Learning/Teaching Collaborative (LTC), which develops and supports autonomous teaching teams and matches them with full-time graduate interns in public school settings. Wheelock, Simmons, Boston, and Brookline Schools have been involved in this effort, with initial support from Bill Dandridge. A similar partnership with special education interns exists between Lesley College and Brookline. These programs have been in place for more than five years, with funding from the colleges, local school systems, Overbrook and Frances Rodgers Foundations, and competitive federal support.
- c. Project CESAME, an NSF/Noyce Foundation/business partnership to fund innovative science, math, technology education.
- d. Mass Learn Pike Project, to develop and pilot new technology responses to educational needs and opportunities - federal, state, and local funding support.
- e. Creative programming for adults and children through collaborative efforts between Adult Education and public school programs, particularly in the area of early childhood and parenting programs, arts programs, and technology training.
- f. Eastern Massachusetts Initiative (EMI), a coalition of school systems working with Dr. Jeff Howard to address the achievement of African American children.
- g. Simmons College Center for Science and Technology in Schools.

This group has a depth and breadth of experience helping all kinds of children, adults, and organizations to grow and develop. We understand the strengths and limitations of public education, and believe some new models are necessary. This proposal lays out some parameters and visions, but none of us has ever seen or worked in the type of school we propose. We will need to expand our Team to add areas of missing strength. Additional recruitment will include:

- More Hispanic partners - people who know the community and have experience with bilingual education. At the next stage of this proposal, we would meet with NELSON MERCED, FELIX ARROYO, and JOSE VINCENTY, each of whom works closely with the Boston community, and network from there.

- More teacher voices. We need to recruit early childhood, middle and high school teachers, particularly people who have worked successfully in a team teaching context.



- Once we identify a potential site, we also expect to add local leaders to review the plans to date and shape the school further.
- Area collaboratives, such as EdCo, will be invited to help us design the professional internship program.
- Finally, we need some business and technology partners to help us with additional fundraising, technology access.

We have already made friendly overtures to two other groups, and found that each is submitting separate charter school proposals - Silevitch / Noyce, and members of the Multisectoral Planning Team from Upham's Corner. We would hope to provide mutual support to these initiatives, and connect through telecommunications, if possible, to all funded projects as an added resource group.

## **8. TIMETABLE:**

Preparations for the school's opening would be as follows:

**MARCH, 1994:** Pursue next level contacts and market written proposal to identify a receptive community. Obtain necessary letters of support, refine basic program ideas, and explore possible sites.

**APRIL, 1994:** Complete Part III of Application, with input from expanded Planning Team. Advertise for prospective teachers for Stage 1 implementation (two each Pre-Kindergarten - Grade 2 team, Grades 3 - 5 team) and administrative team.

**MAY/JUNE, 1994:** Finalize site selection. Negotiate specific partner college involvement. Present budget for FY 95. Hire teacher teams; complete teacher needs assessment for immediate and longer term professional development needs.

**SUMMER, 1994:** Planning Team meets; teacher teams are oriented to program in a two week workshop designed to provide an overview of program components and specific skill development in communication and conflict resolution (entire leadership team will join teachers for this training); all partners and teachers connect to a telecommunications conference, and identify growth goals and mentoring support for the 1994-95 school year.

**FALL, 1994:** Spanish or English classes begin for all teachers, community leaders, and school-based partners. Planning Team and teacher teams meet monthly: Planning Team to link with local public and service





agencies (libraries, police, health centers, etc.), develop communication products and strategies, resolve facilities issues, establish transportation policy, organize logistics for adult programs and children's support programs (such as lunch, extended day care), develop proposals for additional funds; teaching team to develop core program and support programs in a flexible time frame for children and adults. Administrative team will meet with both groups and coordinate activities and information. Electronic mail allows people to continue dialogue between meetings.

WINTER, 1995: Media and grass-roots advertising campaign within the community. Begin application process. Develop budget for next fiscal year. Planning groups and language study continue. Begin teacher recruitment for new team.

SPRING, 1995: Complete admissions. Finalize budget. Select and order materials and equipment. Resolve transportation issues. Recruiting of graduate interns from partner colleges. Open House/orientation for incoming students. Teachers plan summer workshop agenda. Planning groups and language study continue. Hire new team members to begin planning for September, 1996.

SUMMER, 1995: Hire bilingual Custodian and Secretary. Native English teachers, administrators, and on-site partners participate in a Spanish immersion experience (e.g. 2 weeks in Cuernavaca). Planning team, teachers, and administrators meet together and separately to prepare for a September school opening. New team members oriented, with skills workshop repeated. This time initial team members co-teach with college partners.

*Four teams, working with 300 students in Grades Pre-Kindergarten through 5, will be ready to begin in September, 1995. During the next four years of guaranteed state funding, 50 new students, and corresponding teacher teams, will be added yearly. The lead class will be completing Grade 8 and entering Grade 9 at the close of the first funding cycle.*

## **9. EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT:**

Because of the tight timeline of the proposal deadline and the difficulty of long distance proposal development and communication, we have not yet identified a community. We expect to be able to provide letters by the end of March.





**10. EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM:** *In keeping with the school's mission to support children's learning with a community of learners, the description of educational program suggests STRUCTURE and PROGRAM for children and adults.*

***Structure:***

For Children: A pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 continuous program will be established in stages (See timeline). Teaching/learning teams of five resident, full-time teachers to approximately seventy-five students will be the basic organizational unit. Children will remain in the same team for three to four years through Grade 8, depending on learning needs, so that teachers, parents, and children can develop good communication and productive partnerships. Children will engage in core learning activities within their team (between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Monday through Friday), but will have opportunities to work with other adults and children for focused learning and special projects before and after core time, and throughout the year. Each team will be responsible for developing learning content, concepts, skills, sequence, materials, schedule, and assessments that address core learning and also match the entry expectations of the next team.

All students will be expected to arrive at school by 8 a.m. for small group, mentor directed, or self-directed work. Students will meet in their team during core learning time, and will divide again at 2 p.m. for special project time, help time, and intensive learning time. This requires flexible schedules for students, teachers, and mentors, and 5.5 days per week plus year round access for children. Further, it implies unequal formal learning time. While ALL students will be expected to participate in their choice of several learning projects that extend the traditional school day (week, year) and vary the traditional learning format, SOME students also will be required to add on activities that target specific skill development. Children will be encouraged to add on time, as needed, to assure excellence, and mentors working with them will coach, cajole, and celebrate student progress toward excellence. For example, some children might start school at 7:30 a.m. with an extra Spanish conversation class, while others receive extra math help. Still others might meet to work on a telecommunications project under teacher direction, or to complete a self-directed group project. These special sessions are of finite duration, with opportunities for teacher (or mentor) and student to decide on both initial and continued participation. A variety of special sessions will also be available at 2 p.m. - challenge topics, additional practice/tutorial sessions, research help, etc. After 3



p.m., an extended day program would also be available at the school site until 6 p.m., with opportunities for play and homework help. One on one mentoring between children and community members will be individualized to accommodate time constraints. This may include evening, weekend, break and/or summer time. On Saturdays, school breaks, and traditional summer breaks, the school would also offer structured learning opportunities - skill development and community application/problem solving, content immersion, theme study, expeditionary learning experiences, internships, and student-designed group and individual projects. On any given day (Monday through Saturday) and year-round, one might expect to see a sizable subgroup of students engaged in learning activities outside of the core learning time. If there were no activity, it would mean that children were learning off site in an immersion activity. During the child's school career (Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12), we would expect him or her to participate in at least one of each structured learning experience described above.

The picture that emerges is not one, but a series of learning communities that support the child's learning needs and respect the integrity of the specific skills and knowledge being emphasized. These learning communities meet at different times of day, and for different lengths of time. Children will be grouped by mixed ability when this makes sense (e.g. the introduction of a new math concept), by ability for specific skills work, and by interest for special projects (e.g. book discussion group, challenge projects). Group association will also depend on the nature of the learning activity, such as ad hoc membership (specific skill help), drop-in membership (homework help), short-term membership (special project), long-term membership (apprenticeship, mentoring relationship), intensive membership (immersion program, extended educational trip), etc.

For Adults: The notion of different configurations of people for different types of learning and communication also applies to adult members. Teachers and mentors (parents and professionals from the community) will be trained in teams, with telecommunications access to one another and within conference groups. Neighborhood resources, such as libraries, museums, and participating colleges will also be linked electronically with teams. A basic pool of adult resources (resident master teachers, community members, and partner college content and teaching experts) will be enriched annually by pre-professionals (full-time graduate interns and short term undergraduate students) and professional teachers on short-term, paid leave from their school system (this notion of a Professional Development School is based on the Schenley





School model in Pittsburgh, and would target member communities within an educational collaborative, such as EdCo).

Each team member would be expected to mentor one graduate intern, and to make the resources of the entire team available to the pre-professional intern group assigned to that team. Additionally, the team would request a specific number of professional interns, at their discretion, for additional mentoring. Besides serving as mentors, the master teachers earn the privilege of time out of the classroom to pursue their own professional development, with the potential to be mentored by college partners or other professionals. The presence of these added resource people (interns) makes this release time possible without the necessity of hiring substitute teachers. (This idea, coined "Alternate Professional Time - APT by the Learning/Teaching Collaborative, has been operating successfully for six years in participating Boston and Brookline schools.)

For All: A School Council, comprised of representative students, parents, teachers, administrator, and college and community partners, will meet to develop and articulate community or village values and a working constitution that will guide policy and program development before the school is opened. Subsequently, this group will review new ideas and resolve conflicts as these are brought forward. This group will operate on a consensus, "win-win" philosophy, and will receive training from college partners in techniques of good communication and conflict resolution. In addition to the work of the School Council, the school will invite participation, celebration, and information exchange at many levels - parent breakfasts, student/parent/team assessment sessions, community-initiated learning and problem-solving forums, Spanish/English special events, adult education courses, etc. Local resources (public library, community centers, arts centers, museums, theaters, hospitals, public housing authority, police and fire, churches, etc.) will have both voices and roles in the design and implementation of community events.

### ***Academic Program Description:***

For Children: Teaching teams will use well designed curriculum outlines, as well as information on national and state standards, as a starting point for establishing learning goals and designing core programs to meet these goals. The instructional program will include reciprocal bilingual instruction in Spanish and English. All students will demonstrate proficiency in both languages through a carefully sequenced program that stresses oral fluency and reading comprehension for young





learners, with increased emphasis on written accuracy as children progress through the program. Depending on initial fluency in one or both languages, students will have access to more or less intensive instruction. Spanish and English will constitute the medium for learning in all other disciplines, and multilingual text, literature, trade book, and technology materials will be regularly available in classrooms, libraries, and other resource centers throughout the community. A variety of quality materials are available in Spanish - these materials are already in use in California and the Southwest. Since language development and exploration of the world are the primary tasks for young children, an abundance of language experiences (in reading, writing, oral communication, music, movement, art, and mathematics) will be overlaid on science and social studies themes. As students progress, their initial experiences, emerging skills, interests, and naive theories will provide a framework and context for more rigorous development of skills, multiple intelligences, and content exploration. Students will demonstrate skill and knowledge acquisition through portfolios, products, and performance (Wolf), and will receive special support as needed (in the flexible, finite added time schedule as described under structure). Ultimately students will be able to invent new products and enrich the world of ideas vital to the wider community. Student learning at all levels will expect high quality individual and group work, and accountability for product and process. Opportunities for older children to be paired in mutually beneficial learning projects (such as children's literature projects, physical education partnerships, drill and practice buddies) will be built into the curriculum at all levels.

Technology tools, as described earlier, will be used to enhance learning, to demonstrate learning, and to enable communication and dialogue between children and children, children and adults, adults and adults. Each team will have microcomputers and laptops, with modems. Children, teachers, parents, mentors, and community members will receive formal training on network use and word processing, and subsequent help learning specific applications, as requested. Children will learn and regularly use software and multiple technologies, either through the school's on site resources, or partner resources. A specific fundraising effort targeted to technology purchases will be necessary.

In addition to school-sponsored programs, children will have access, as needed, to programs and resources within the community. The school will attempt NOT to duplicate community resources, but rather to work cooperatively with these resource people and institutions. The school will be located strategically to take advantage of such resources, and



sites will be evaluated with respect to the strength and interest of potential local partners.

For Adults: Adults will also be expected to participate in a "curriculum" to develop a strong, common set of professional and community-building skills for a bilingual context. Resident master teachers will design and refine a basic program, over time, in conjunction with college and professional partners. A leadership group (teachers, college and community representatives) will participate in basic training during the planning year before the school opens (1994-95), and new community members, interns, and replacement teachers (those people hired to substitute for teachers on partial sabbatical) will be trained subsequently, on an annual basis, as orientation to the new school culture that has been created.

Additionally, resident master teachers, professional partners, and community leaders will design a continuous education program for themselves, based on learning needs defined by the total group (or various subgroups) for a particular year's study. Once the school is up and running, a governance board will assume responsibility for continued program planning.

## **11. STUDENT PERFORMANCE:**

Students will engage, at the earliest stages of their formal learning, as partners in goal-setting and assessment (with parent, mentor, and teachers). They will have a clear sense of their job description as learners, and will be active participants in the shaping of an individualized program of study, such that they will have a stake in their own success at a high standard of performance. The school will not compromise on quality, and children will learn that appropriately relevant and challenging assignments merit best effort. Children will witness peer performance, view peer products, and subject their own work for sharing and feedback.

Assessment in this school becomes a new basic skill. Unlike traditional schooling, in which the teacher knows the learning agenda but the child does not, the teacher shares this information. The child understands what is required, and works, reworks products to learn and demonstrate skill mastery. Teacher and child will decide together when a skill becomes automatic, and will document and celebrate this achievement by saving representative work in a portfolio and setting new, more challenging





goals. At formal assessment times, the teacher and child will review the portfolio first, then make a presentation of achievements and new target goals to the child's parent and mentor. A report format will guide this dialogue, but will not reflect mandatory letter grades through Grade 8. At the high school level, teacher and student will negotiate grades for core learning subjects, based on portfolio evidence. Representative work, negotiated between the teacher and student at all levels, will become part of the child's permanent portfolio, and advance with him or her to the next team.

In addition to this close accountability by teacher and student, the school will also require that students participate in state testing programs, for a standardized measure of skill performance by the entire student group. Traditional tests, quizzes, etc. will be used to give student and teacher feedback on teaching, learning, and retention of learning, but not for grades, per se. Students will be expected to rework mistakes and continue to engage with learning test material that has not been understood or mastered.

Numerous opportunities for extra help and support (such as those described above) will be offered or required, as needed, outside of core learning time. Learning specialists, such as Reading Recovery Teachers, might begin their day at 7 a.m. and leave by 2 p.m. so that students do not miss core learning time. No child will be assigned permanently to a remedial group. Children will be expected to set goals in the extra help sessions, and exit from these sessions when both teacher/mentor and student agree that goals have been met. If a particular intervention is not working, teacher, child, and mentor will work together to design and monitor an alternate strategy. No child will be allowed to fail.

## **12. SCHOOL EVALUATION:**

Each spring the school community will engage in an assessment exercise that looks at the general match between theory and practice of the school's mission statement. First, this exercise will be conducted by individuals, then in appropriate units (e.g. students, teams, interns, mentors, program collaborators, community leaders, parents, governing board) so that these perspectives and voices are heard. Finally, information will be brought together and reviewed by an ad hoc, representative group charged to look for common themes, issues, etc. The result will be a combination of individual goals (to be shared within an appropriate unit), unit goals, and whole school goals for the following



year. After year one, the achievement of the goals also becomes part of the assessment dialogue. This kind of self-criticism is necessary for a community where everyone is constantly becoming better at what they know, what they do, and who they are. It validates mistake-making, readjusting, or redirecting at a personal and institutional level, and must be publicly modeled by adults for children to believe that mistakes and failures are normal parts of growing better.

This exercise will include the entire community, and will set the stage for planning. Regular dialogue with parents and community members will happen around the sharing of children's work and progress; planning, implementation, and evaluation of joint projects; open sessions and regular communication from the governing board; and ongoing forums that bring school people and community members together to learn together or solve a problem. Finally, many groups throughout the community will be linked electronically for ongoing, informal dialogue.

### **13. HUMAN RESOURCE INFORMATION:**

Adults will reflect an ethnic mix of men and women, and special care will be taken to match people who have different interests and areas of expertise, so that specialty work (such as art, music, physical education, Spanish/ESL, reading remediation) can be integrated within the normal context of group work and team planning. At least one member of each team, and one member of the administrative team, will be fluent in Spanish. Interested teachers will be expected to have:

- \* five years of successful teaching experience in a diverse setting,
- \* appropriate certification
- \* an advanced degree
- \* proficiency in Spanish and English, or a willingness to learn,
- \* some experience working in a teaching team or as a mentor,
- \* a willingness to work a flexible, but extended school year,
- \* demonstrated ability to develop program materials,
- \* familiarity with current pedagogy,
- \* an interest in the school's mission,
- \* willingness to participate in the life of the community,
- \* experience with assessment, as described in this proposal.

Teacher candidates will be interviewed by a team of school and community people. Administrative candidates will also be expected to meet the above criteria, and further demonstrate five years of successful administrative experience in a diverse setting. The school will open with twenty teachers and two administrators, and will add two or three





additional teachers each year as classes are added, until it reaches a full complement of about forty-five teachers. Initially, there will be two administrators, and a third will be added when the high school program begins.

Annually, teachers will set individual and team goals for improving instruction and for professional development. Each teacher will choose a mentor to work with him/her on individual goals, and an administrator will work with the team on group goals. Each teacher will complete a formal self-assessment, and the mentor will add comments and suggestions for new goal-setting. Finally, the teacher will respond to the mentor's comments. This formal exchange will be kept in a teacher's folder, and reviewed by the teacher and an administrator every two years or sooner, if the teacher requests help. Administrative review will follow a similar process, but will involve input from the governing board annually.

Informal evaluation will be ongoing, and the shared responsibility of the teaching team and administrators who see the teacher teaching and interacting with children and adults on a daily basis. Similarly, administrators will request formal and informal feedback on a variety of school and community projects which they organize.

Salaries, contracts, and benefits have not been worked out. It would be our intent to offer a comparable base salary to a public school system, then add a fair per diem rate for a longer school year and required summer professional development time.

#### **14. GOVERNANCE:**

Plans for a Governing Board have been outlined previously. We envision a trained group that represents the perspectives of all segments of the community - students, teachers, parents, mentors and partners, community leaders. This group will take over the functions of the Planning Team once the school is opened. Initially, it will include some members of the original team. Individual constituencies will nominate their own representatives for two-year service on the board. Each constituency will have at least two representatives, and terms will be staggered so that two new members are not beginning together from the same group. New members will be trained by existing members, and mentoring relationships will be initiated as people enter their two years of service. The Board will maintain several at large places on the board, and will use these positions to maintain diversity.





The Board will be a conduit for information to and from the school, and a forum for community thinking, planning, and decision-making. The Board will set policy, resolve issues or disputes on policy interpretation, initiate programs that respond to community needs or concerns, and set organizational goals. It will participate in the evaluation of administrators, and will review and approve new programs and directions. Board meetings will be conducted bilingually, and will be open to the community. Board minutes will be available in Spanish and English, and the Board will also produce an Annual Report on School Programs and Progress. Board members will be expected to discuss issues and ideas with their constituency between Board meetings.

## **15. BUILDING OPTIONS:**

As explained previously in this proposal, we need to identify a welcoming community as a first step. We hope to find a match this spring - see timetable.

